

Application No. 10/692,331
Reply to Office Action of November 7, 2006

Docket No.: 65783-0031

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed November 7, 2006, and thanks Examiner Cavallari for the detailed review of the pending claims. Applicants acknowledge and thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 17, 18 and 19. Applicant has amended claims 17 and 18 to incorporate the base claim and any intervening claims, according to the Examiner's recommendation. Applicant has further amended claims 1, 12, and 25, and canceled claims 6 and 14 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 12 can be found at least in claims 6 and 14 as originally filed. Accordingly, claims 15, 7-13, and 15-25 remain pending in this application. At least for the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully traverses the foregoing rejections. Further, Applicant believes that there are also reasons other than those set forth below why the pending claims are patentable, and reserves the right to set forth those reasons, and to argue for the patentability of claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the above amendment, the new claims, and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 11-16, and 20-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,127,741 ("Matsuda et al") in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0041473A1 ("Deguchi"). The Examiner also rejected claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Matsuda in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0066168 A1 ("George et al"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter contained in dependent claim 6, and now recites "[a] control node power system providing power redundancy to certain devices of a vehicle, comprising... at least one first relay for selectively providing power to at least one device of a first class; and at least one second relay for selectively providing power to at least one device of a second class, said first and second class devices powered by a single node, wherein... upon disruption of said primary power feed, said at least one second class device is selectively powered by said secondary power feed by means of said second set of relays; and wherein said at least one first class device represents at least one component of a vehicle considered unimportant for a safe operation of the vehicle, and said at

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least one second class device represents at least one component of the vehicle considered important for the safe operation of the vehicle." Similarly, independent claim 12 has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claim 14, and recites "[a] power distribution node of a vehicle, comprising... at least one first relay for selectively distributing power from said primary power feed to at least one first class device of the vehicle; at least one second relay for selectively distributing power from one of said primary power feed and secondary power feed to at least one second class device of the vehicle, said first and second class devices powered by the node...wherein said at least one first class device is unimportant to a safe operation of the vehicle, while said at least one second class device is important to the safe operation of the vehicle." Independent claim 22 recites "[a] method of providing power to a vehicle device, comprising the steps of: selectively providing power to a plurality of vehicle devices by means of a power distribution control node, said plurality of vehicle devices comprising a first class of devices and a second class of devices, said power being derived from a primary power feed; isolating said first class of devices from said primary power feed upon an occurrence of a disruption in said primary power feed; and selectively providing power to said first class of devices by means of said power distribution control node... wherein said first class of devices comprise those vehicle devices whose functions are considered important toward safely maintaining operation of the vehicle." Independent claim 25 recites "[a] power distribution node, comprising... a first power distribution means...; a second power distribution means for distributing power from said first power feed to a second set of load devices and for distributing power from said second power feed to said second set of load devices, said first and second sets of load devices being connected to the node; a means for selectively isolating said second power distribution means from said first power feed; and a means for selectively connecting said second power distribution means to said second power feed...wherein said first set of load devices represents components of a vehicle considered unimportant for a safe operation of the vehicle, and said second set of load devices represents components of the vehicle considered important for the safe operation of the vehicle." As such, the arrangements as presently claimed selectively preserve power to a particular group or groups of load devices, while isolating other group(s) of load devices that receive power from the same node, the devices for which power is preserved being of greater importance to vehicle safety than the devices which are isolated.

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It is respectfully submitted that the prior art of record neither teaches nor suggests the arrangement of independent claims 1, 12, 22, or 25. The device of Matsuda preserves power to a node of a vehicular power distribution apparatus, such that every load device attached to each node receives power as a single group, without any regard to differences between the various devices regarding vehicle safety. Applicants specifically point out that Matsuda discloses an apparatus for maintaining power to a plurality of power distribution nodes, and a single load or group of loads (23) connected to each power distribution node, when a failure occurs in a line transmitting power to the power distribution node. *See Matsuda at Col. 3, lines 49-54; FIG. 1; and FIG. 2.* Matsuda makes no mention of any ability to isolate various groups of load devices which are connected to a single power distribution node during a failure of a power source, and further to preserve power to devices having greater importance for vehicle safety. Further, Matsuda teaches providing power loads (23) in a single group through power distribution node (5), such that the loads (23) are either all "on" or all "off." *See Matsuda, FIG. 2.*

The Examiner states that "Matsuda teaches powering devices (5), which is a second class device, and (6), which is a first class device from a common node, read on by the T2 connection to the power supply..." However, Applicants point out that Matsuda does not contemplate preserving power to certain devices connected to a single node while isolating other devices connected to the same node based upon importance for vehicle safety. The T2 connection disclosed by Matsuda supplies power from a power source to various nodes disposed about the vehicle, each of which supply power to a group of devices. The groups of devices are disposed in various areas of a vehicle, but are not segregated into classes based upon importance to vehicle safety. Matsuda teaches nodes which contain a plurality of load devices which are classified differently with respect to vehicle safety. For example, at Col. 18, lines 38-45 of Matsuda, a load L is described as being a "headlight, door driving electrical component, etc." No distinction with respect to vehicle safety is made between the devices. Accordingly, Matsuda neither teaches nor suggests preserving power to devices having greater importance for vehicle safety while isolating devices having lesser relevance to vehicle safety. Matsuda therefore not only fails to disclose, but also teaches away from "...[a] first relay for selectively providing power to at least one device of a first class; and [a] second relay for selectively providing power to at least one device of a second class, said first and second class devices powered by a single node, wherein... upon disruption of said primary power feed, said at least one second class device is selectively powered by said secondary power feed by means of said

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second set of relays...wherein said at least one first class device represents at least one component of a vehicle considered unimportant for a safe operation of the vehicle, and said at least one second class device represents at least one component of the vehicle considered important for the safe operation of the vehicle," as recited in claim 1, for example. The other prior art of record fails to remedy the shortcomings of Matsuda. Neither Deguchi nor George teach selectively isolating one group of load devices while preserving power to other load devices connected to the same power distribution node as the first group of devices, or distinguishing between groups of devices based upon relevance to vehicle safety.

As such, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Matsuda with either Deguchi or George neither discloses nor suggests the arrangement presently claimed. Further, claims 2-5, 7-11, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, and 23-24 depend from independent claims 1, 12, and 22, and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons as those stated above for claims 1, 12, and 22. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejections are respectfully requested.

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In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-0013, under Order No. 65783-0031 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: January 8, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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